

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRESIDENT BANZER'S BOLIVIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BANZER GAVE A TELEVISED SPEECH
AUGUST 5 ON THE EVE OF BOLIVIA'S NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY WHICH HAD LITTLE NEWS,BUT WHICH REITERATED
THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY'S NATION BUILDING PHILOSOPHIES,
PRAISED THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS SINCE
BANZER TOOK POWER IN 1971, AND AFFIRMED THE GOB'S INTENTION
TO RETURN TO A DEMOCARATIC SYSTEM IN ITS OWN WAY, CONSISTENT
WITH THE NATION'S HISTORY, PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITY. HE
ADDED CRYPTICALLY THAT PRIOR TO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION
(I.E. RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT) THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION
OF SOCIETY AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL POWER WOULD BE
NECESSARY, MEANING, IT APPEARS, THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT
WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE PRIORITY TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY IN THE PROCESS OF A RETURN TO CIVILIAN
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. BANZER FAILED TO ANNOUNCE RUMORED
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CABINET AND MILITARY HIGH COMMAND CHANGES, WHICH NOW ARE BEING
TALKED ABOUT FOR THE AUGUST 19 ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MILITARY
TAKEOVER. AN INTERESTING ASPECT OF HIS SPEECH IS THE EFFORT
TO PROTRAY THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY'S NATION-BUILDING EFFORTS AS
THE LOGICAL EXTENSION OF BOLIVIA'S 1952 REVOLUTION AND THUS
TO LEGITIMIZE HIS (AND THE MILITARY'S) CONTINUED RULE.

2. PRESIDENT BANZER'S SPEECH HAD THE FLAVOR OF OLD FASHIONED FOURTH OF JULY POLITICAL RHETORIC, PRINCIPALLY ORIENTED TOWARD CONVINCING THE PUBLIC OF THE SUCCESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP THE NATION ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY AND BRING POLITICAL STABILITY. BANZER PROBABLY ALSO HAD AN EYE ON THE EXTENSION OF TELEVISION COVERAGE DURING THE PAST YEAR TO MAJOR MINING AREAS AND SECONDARY CITIES. IN HIS SPEECH, HE REVIEWED AT SOME LENGTH THE SMALL NATION'S HISTORY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE, FIRST DURING THE COLONIAL ERA, THEN UNDER A DOMESTIC ELITE, AND FINALLY UNDER A SYSTEM DOMINATED AND OPERATED BY THE INDUSTRIAL POWERS. HE REVIEWED THE NATION'S DEPRESSED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION AT THE TIME OF THE 1971 COUP AND THE IMPROVED ECONOMIC SITUATION, INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY, AND INCREASED PUBLIC CONFIDENCE WHICH HAS SINCE OCCURRED. HE SAID THE CURRENT YEAR WOULD SHOW A GNP GROWTH OF OVER 6 PER CENT, A BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SURPLUS OF \$64 MILLION, FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES OF \$230 MILLION, THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN BOLIVIAN HISTORY, AND MORE THAN ANTICIPATED INCREASES IN BANK DEPOSITS AND GOVERNMENT REVENUES. BANZER ADDED THAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO REDUCE CONTRABAND AND TO REGULATE THE FINANCES OF THE NOTORIOUSLY INEFFICIENT PUBLIC SECTOR CORPORATIONS. HE CLAIMED THAT THE IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY, STRENGTHENING OF PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES, A MORE ACTIVE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND INCREASED FLOW OF DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES WERE THANKS TO BOLIVIA'S POLITICAL STABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL ORDER.

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3. BANZER THEN ASSERTED THAT HARD WORK, SACRIFICE AND INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE NATION'S CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT, EMPHASIZING THAT A STABLE POLITICAL SYSTEM COULD NOT BE BROUGHT ABOUT BY LAW OR DECREE, NOR COULD IT DEPEND ON THE EFFORTS OF ONE PERSON OR ONE SECTOR. HE SAID THAT BEFORE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION, INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIETY WOULD BE NECESSARY, AND BEFORE POLITICAL POWER COULD BE DISTRIBUTED, CONSOLIDATING NATIONAL POWER WOULD BE NECESSARY. HE ENDED BY STATING THAT ONLY THROUGH NATIONAL EFFORTS (TO OVERCOME THE PAST) COULD BOLIVIA ACHIEVE ITS GOALS, INCLUDING A PROMPT AND SOVEREIGN RETURN TO THE SEA.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT. BANZER'S SPEECH, FULL OF VAGUE GENERALITIES, SAID NOTHING NEW ABOUT EITHER HIS COMMITMENT TO RETURN THE NATION TO DEMOCRACY IN 1980, OR ABOUT THE GOB'S RECENT EFFORTS TO GET OUTLET TO THE SEA NEGOTIATIONS GOING AGAIN. IN THAT RESPECT HIS SPEECH HAD LITTLE OF INTEREST FOR BOLIVIA'S "RECESSED" POLITICAL PARTIES OR OTHER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. AN INTERESTING ASPECT OF THE SPEECH HOWEVER, WAS BANZER'S EFFORT TO PORTRAY HIS REGIME AS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE MNR REVOLUTION OF 1952, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS A "NECESSARY STEP IN BOLIVIA'S

BATTLE AGAINST DEPENDENCY." IN DOING THIS BANZER'S INTENTION
SEEMS TO BE TO LEGITIMIZE HIS MILITARY COUP OF AUGUST 1971,
AND BROADEN THE POPULAR BASE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED
RULE.
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